

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NRC-07 PM-05 ACDA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07

IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 OES-07 FEAE-00

DODE-00 SS-15 SP-02 /096 W

-----046512 021727Z /46

R 021630Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1195

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS

ERDA WASHDC

ERDA GERMANTOWN

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 09234

USEEC

STATE PASS TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION; ERDA FOR
SIEVERING, AIA

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: ENRG, TECH, EEC

SUBJ: EC POSITION ON FAST BREEDER REACTORS

REF: BRUSSELS 8235

1. THE COMMISSION ON JULY 28, APPROVED A COMMUNICATION TO THE COUNCIL SETTING FORTH A PROPOSED COMMUNITY POSITION ON FAST BREEDER REACTORS. THIS IS THE SECOND OF THREE PAPERS ON NUCLEAR ISSUES TO BE ISSUED IN JULY. THE FIRST WAS ON REPROCESSING (REFTEL). THE THIRD, ALSO APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION ON JULY 28, DFALS WITH RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL AND IS REPORTED SEPARATELY.

2. THE DOCUMENT FIRST OUTLINES THE ROLE OF NUCLEAR POWER IN MEETING COMMUNITY ENERGY NEEDS, NOTING THE UNCLASSIFIED

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LIMITATIONS ON THE WORLD SUPPLY OF NATURAL URANIUM AND THE DEPENDENCE OF THE COMMUNITY ON IMPORTING URANIUM SUPPLIES. IT THEN MAKES A CASE FOR FAST BREEDER REACTORS TO HELP SOLVE ENERGY AND DEPENDENCE PROBLEMS AFTER THE YEAR 2000. IT ARGUES THAT INTERRUPTION IN THE PRESENT BREEDER DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS CANNOT BE TOLERATED WITHOUT DELAYING COMMERCIAL DEPLOYMENT, NOW

SCHEDULED FOR, AND NEEDED BY, THE 1990'S.

3. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF BREEDER REACTOR PROGRAMS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY IS GIVEN, NOTING THAT THE ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE "ARE SO FAR UNMATCHED IN ANY OTHER REGION OF THE WORLD."

4. FINALLY, THE REPORT OUTLINES THE CONSTRAINTS AND PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INTRODUCTION OF BREEDER REACTORS ON A COMMERCIAL SCALE AND PROPOSES COMMUNITY STEPS TO OVERCOME THEM. FIVE AREAS ARE IDENTIFIED:

A. NON-PROLIFERATION CONCERNS. THE COMMISSION NOTES THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT SHORT-TERM PROBLEMS RELATED TO PROLIFERATION CONCERNS OF THE USE OF PLUTONIUM ARE LINKED TO REPROCESSING AND RECYCLE MORE THAN TO THE SPECIFIC TYPE OF REACTOR IN WHICH THE PLUTONIUM IS USED. FOR THE SHORT/MEDIUM TERM, THE TOTAL INVENTORY OF PLUTONIUM WILL BE ESSENTIALLY ALL FROM THERMAL REACTORS AND THE COMMISSION STRATEGY FOR THIS WAS INCLUDED IN THEIR REPORT ON REPROCESSING (REFTEL). FOR THE LONGER TERM (BEYOND YEAR 2000,) BRED FUELS (PLUTONIUM) WILL BE PREDOMINANT AND MUCH LARGER QUANTITIES WILL HAVE TO BE HANDLED. NO SPECIFIC ACTIONS ARE PROPOSED FOR THIS SITUATION EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR THE COMMUNITY TO AGREE ON A POSITION WELL IN ADVANCE

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OF MASSIVE COMMERCIALIZATION.

B. SAFETY ISSUES. THE REPORT ACKNOWLEDGES THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSURING SAFETY OF BREEDER REACTORS. IT OUTLINES THE SIGNIFICANT ONGOING WORK, BUT NOTES THAT "A GREATER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN FAST BREEDER REACTOR SAFETY PROGRAMS IS REQUIRED." THE COMMISSION INTENDS TO SUBMIT DURING 1978 PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ACTION IN FAST BREEDER SAFETY R&D.

C. REPROCESSING AND RECYCLE OF FAST REACTOR FUELS. THE COMMISSION WILL UNDERTAKE A STUDY, "IN COLLABORATION WITH INTERESTED PARTIES," OF TECHNICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE FIRST GENERATION REPROCESSING SYSTEMS AND ALTERNATIVE PROMISING ADVANCED PROCESSES. THE PURPOSE WOULD BE TO DETERMINE POSSIBLE TIMING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A FIRST COMMERCIAL PLANT AND TO ASSIST IN BETTER DEFINING FAST REACTOR COMMERCIALIZATION STRATEGIES.

D. CODES AND STANDARDS. THE PROBLEM IS THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILING TO ACHIEVE EC-WIDE UNIFORM TECHNICAL CODES AND STANDARDS RELATED TO DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND

OPERATION OF BREEDER REACTORS. SUCH FAILURE WOULD
INHIBIT TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY,
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AND WOULD SLOW DOWN COMMERCIALIZATION. THE COMMISSION
NOTES THAT WORK IS UNDERWAY IN THIS AREA (THROUGH THE EC
FAST REACTOR COORDINATING COMMITTEE) AND PLANS TO SUBMIT
FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS DURING 1978.

E. FINANCING. THE REPORT NOTES THE VERY HIGH DEVELOPMENT

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DODE-00 SS-15 SP-02 /096 W

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R 021630Z AUG 77

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COSTS THAT WILL BE REQUIRED FOR INTRODUCING FAST REACTORS
COMMERCIALY AND PROPOSES THAT THE COMMUNITY "CONTRIBUTE
TO THE FINANCING OF FAST REACTOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS,
INCLUDING THEIR FUEL CYCLE."

5. THE REPORT CONCLUDES WITH AN INVITATION TO THE
COUNCIL TO AGREE:

- THAT THE COMMUNITY AND ITS MEMBER STATES MUST PRESERVE
THE OPTION OF MAKING FAST BREEDER REACTORS AVAILABLE
TO UTILITIES ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS DURING THE EARLY
90'S.
- THAT THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE FAST BREEDER TECHNOLOGIES
BY INDUSTRY SHOULD CONTINUE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION AND
THAT AT THE SAME TIME INCREASED EFFORT SHOULD BE
APPLIED TOWARDS ACHIEVING FULLY ADEQUATE PERFORMANCE OF
THIS REACTOR SYSTEM IN TERMS OF SAFETY, RADIOLOGICAL
PROTECTION AND IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.
- THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION

OF THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES.

6. COPIES OF THE COMMISSION PAPER ARE BEING POUCHED
TO OES/NET/IM AND EUR/RPE IN STATE AND SIEVERING, ERDA.
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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Disposition Comment:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS USEEC
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Image Path:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1424027
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EC POSITION ON FAST BREEDER REACTORS
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4cf19e4f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009